



Commonwealth of Kentucky  
Office of the Governor

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**Lt. Gov. Abramson Hosts State, Local Leaders  
to Launch Second Round of ‘Close the Deal’**

*Program challenges high school seniors to pursue additional  
education after graduation*

**FRANKFORT, Ky. (Aug. 27, 2013)** – Lieutenant Governor Jerry Abramson and state education officials today joined local, business and education leaders from four Kentucky communities to launch the second round of “Close the Deal,” an initiative aimed at challenging high school seniors to pursue additional education after graduation.

Covington-Holmes, Gallatin County, Greenup County and Logan County are the four new high schools participating in Close the Deal this year.

“The Close the Deal initiative creates a college-going culture in high schools for students who aren’t yet considering higher education,” Abramson said. “If we truly want to prepare Kentucky’s next generation of leaders for the demands of the 21st century workforce, we must continue to find ways to encourage and assist our high school students to seek additional education.”

Close the Deal is unique because it supports high school counselors and engages the business and postsecondary communities in helping students attain further education past high school, Abramson said.

“We created Close the Deal when I was mayor of Louisville because we realized that many talented students who would earn a high school diploma

had no idea what to do next, which is one reason I expanded the program statewide last year. I'm thrilled to be partnering with our four new high schools."

Campbell County High School, Lawrence County High School and Bullitt Central High School launched Close the Deal in 2012 with positive results, Abramson said.

For example, Bullitt Central had a significant increase of students applying and being accepted into college, according to Shannon Sellinger, counselor at Bullitt Central. Roughly 94 percent of seniors applied to college, earning almost \$4 million in scholarships, an increase of almost \$1 million from last year, she said. The school also had the largest increase in the state of students who filled out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid.

In taking Close the Deal statewide, Abramson formed a partnership with the Kentucky Department of Education to add the program to the department's "Operation Preparation" initiative.

Operation Preparation was launched in August 2011 and combines the efforts of the Department of Education and the Education and Workforce Development Cabinet to discuss life after high school with students.

"Close the Deal complements Operation Preparation's mission, which is to encourage partnerships between communities and their schools to ensure that students are ready for college and careers," said Education Commissioner Terry Holliday. "Close the Deal provides students with the information and tools they will need to explore higher education options, raising their comfort levels and knowledge as they prepare for life after high school."

Holliday joined Carl Rollins, executive director of the Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority, at the kickoff at the Kentucky Education Center in Frankfort.

"We are honored to be part of Close the Deal activities again this year," Rollins said. "The program enhances KHEAA's mission to expand educational opportunities and enable Kentuckians to attain their higher education goals. We strive daily to encourage students to reach their full potential, and Close the Deal is a great way to kick off the academic year."

Each participating high school had administrators represented with local elected officials and representatives from local chambers of commerce in each county.

At each Close the Deal launch, seniors will meet with college representatives regarding how to apply for admission and financial aid, while local business

leaders will outline the skills needed for current and future opportunities. In addition, students will have an opportunity to meet with representatives from many Kentucky colleges and universities at the event.

“The successful launch of each Close the Deal event is due to the partnership between state and local officials, educators and business leaders who want seniors to pursue higher education, whether through community college for a certificate or a two-year associate degree, or a traditional four-year university,” Abramson said.

The 2013 Close the Deal events will take place in October and early November:

- Covington-Holmes High School – Friday, Oct. 4;
- Gallatin County High School – Wednesday, Oct. 16;
- Greenup County High School – Tuesday, Oct. 29; and
- Logan County High School – Friday, Nov. 1.

For more information about Close the Deal in Kentucky, visit [www.ltgovernor.ky.gov](http://www.ltgovernor.ky.gov)

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